

## CHOLERA EMERGENCY RISKS: DIRE WASH NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN BAALBEK-HERMEL AREA

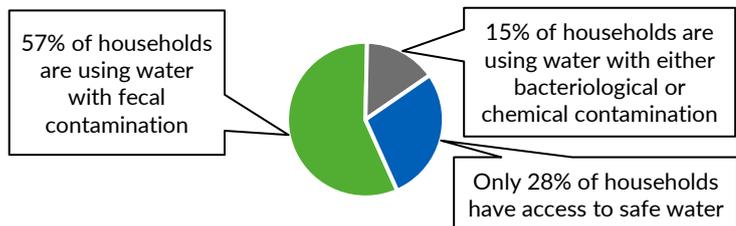
### UNSAFE AND CONTAMINATED WATER

Out of 19.806 individuals (53% women, and 54% children) and 3.522 households living in 493 Informal Tent Settlements (ITSs):

- 80% of households are using unsafe water.
- 16% of households do not have any water storage unit.

Along with alarming and dangerous levels of water contamination:

- 70% of existing boreholes are bacteriologically contaminated, considered not safe to drink but still 64% of ITSs rely on them as their primary source of water.
- 79% of the contaminated boreholes are in Qaa area.



### ALARMING WATER-RELATED DISEASES AND HYGIENE CONDITIONS



- 75% of households confirmed that they are not using or purchasing any cleaning products.
- 67% of households don't know how to prevent waterborne or water-related disease transmission.
- 55% of the households lack knowledge on the critical times for handwashing.
- 32% of ITSs reported at least one symptom related to waterborne diseases in the previous 3 weeks before the assessment.

### DISTRESSING SANITATION SERVICES



- 41% of the households reported access to latrines as their main issue.
- 23% of the households do not have one latrine per household.
- 20% of the ITSs reported open defecation due to a lack of adequate sanitation systems.
- 17% of ITSs have non-compliant latrines which is a risk of contamination of water sources.

### WORRYING WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



- 75% of the existing wastewater container systems are not environmentally friendly, representing a risk of water contamination and health outbreak.
- 69% of households dispose their greywater next to their tents.
- 27% of ITSs discharge greywater and black water above the ground near water sources.

## PROTECTION RISKS

### CHILDREN

Around 12% of black and greywater pits are unsafe (uncovered or partially covered), representing risks of falling for children combined with harmful fecal bacteria contamination.



### SAFETY

26% of the households reported not feeling safe when accessing latrines, 22% due to lack of lights at night and 19% because they have to share the sanitation facilities with other families.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase adequate funding and provide immediate support to respond urgent WASH needs in ITSs in Qaa area:

1. Ensuring urgent installation of water treatment systems on water sources to guarantee access to safe water and reduce the risk of waterborne diseases.
2. Supporting latrine installation with lighting system to reduce open defecation practices and replace non-compliant pits that could contaminate wells.
3. Reinforcing crucial installation of wastewater treatment systems to reduce desludging frequency and improve health and environmental conditions inside ITSs and surrounding hosting communities.
4. Promoting hygiene practices activities such as handwashing, water tank and latrine cleaning that can prevent the potential spread of cholera and other waterborne diseases.
5. Distributing hygiene and disinfection kits to ensure adequate hygiene conditions at household level.
6. Targeting all community members and areas with confirmed or suspected cholera cases.
7. Strengthening the collaboration with Municipalities encouraging the increase of solid waste collection in ITSs with confirmed cases.

### RISK OF CHOLERA SPREAD

There is a risk of contracting cholera disease in the assessed communities in the Baalbek - Hermel area given the dire water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions identified, **action must be taken now to prevent the spread of cholera.**

How is cholera spread?

- By **drinking contaminated water** (most common).
- By **direct contact with the faces** of a contaminated person (usually via the **hands**).
- By eating **contaminated food** that has come in contact with **human feces**.

*Action Against Hunger has been responding to urgent needs of vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees living in Informal Tent Settlements in hard-to-reach areas in the Bekaa Valley for more than 8 years.*

*In January 2022 our team developed a household assessment in the North Bekaa (Baalbek - Hermel area including Qaa area) to identify most distressing WASH needs.*



**FOR CLEAN WATER.  
AGAINST KILLER DISEASES.**

**FOR EVERYONE.  
FOR GOOD.**

**FOR ACTION.  
AGAINST HUNGER.**



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## HARSH VIEWS FROM THE FIELD

“We do not think that the water is safe because last month, we went to the doctor and he said that the water is not good at all, you must drink potable water. *We were suffering from diarrhea, skin rash and vomiting and the water is turbid and muddy, and I do not have money to buy water.*”, explains Fatima, a 34-year-old woman and mother of 4 children, who is living in an ITS in Qaa area.

Greywater being dispose besides a water borehole. Greywater of most ITSs is disposed above ground, increasing the possibility of contaminating underground water, and leading to waterborne or water-related diseases.

(Action Against Hunger /Bilal Abou Haykal).



“*Every 5 minutes, I go to the bathroom, and I suffer from stomach pain and dizziness. Somehow it is a severe diarrhea, it’s not good at all, we need some medicine for this, my parents are taking care of us, but they do not have enough money.*”, says Ahmad, a 11-year-old child, who is living in an ITS in Qaa area and working in the agriculture sector.



An unprotected deep borehole, few meters away from a non-compliant handmade old latrine. This latrine contains a simple pit below and the wastewater disposed might contaminate the underground water (borehole next by).

(Action Against Hunger /Bilal Abou Haykal).



“*We only have external latrines. We don’t have latrines inside the tents. [...] There is no electricity at all. We need lights for these latrines because it’s something important for our safety and the safety of children and our wives.*”, shares Hasan, a 40-year-old father of 5 children living in an ITS in Qaa and working in the agriculture sector.